(d) if not, the possibility explored in that regard; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (e) Government is contemplating to introduce a scheme to promote beekeeping for improving crop productivity during the current Plan. Details of the scheme are being worked out for approval by the competent authority.

Increase in production of Wheat and Rice

2472. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian farmers have once again brought the country to a "State of Plenty" as production of wheat and rice has increased considerably;

(b) if so, what is the buffer stock at present;

(c) to what extent it is more in comparison to the last year;

(d) whether Government are in a position now to export both the wheat and rice during 1994-95;

(e) whether arrangements have been made by Government to keep buffer stock safe; and

(f) whether Government are planning to set up more godowns to keep buffer stocks safe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) The production of Rice and Wheat is likely to be 78 million tonnes and 58 million tonnes respectively during 1993-94 surpassing all previous records.

(b) and (c) the level of stocks of Rice and Wheat in the Central Pool as on 1.7.1994 and 1.7.1993 as against the minimum buffer stocks norms to be maintained as on 1st July every year was as follows:—

(In lakh tonnes)

	Minimum buffer stock to be maintained on 1st July	Stock on 1.7.1994 (Provisional)	Stocks on 1.7.1994 (Provisional)
Rice	92.00	132.60	92.73
Wheat	131.00	164.17	148.89
TOTAL:	223.00	296.77	241.62

(d) Under the extant of Export Policy, export of superior varieties of Wheat (Durum Wheat) is allowed subject to a Minimum Export Price (MEP) of US $ 160 PMT and a quantitative ceiling of 3 lakhs tonne. The export of Basmati Rice is freely allowed. There is no restriction on the quantity and no MEP has been prescribed for such exports. Export of superior varieties of Non-Basmati Rice only is allowed subject to a MEP of US $200 PMT. During 1994-95 Rice and Wheat will be exported as per the provisions of Exim Policy.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The storage capacity (Covered and CAP) available with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) as on 1.7.1994 was about 256.69 lakhs MTs. In order to take care of any additional need the FCI has been delegated powers for hiring additional storage capacity. The Government has plans to construct more godowns in hilly, inaccessible and backward areas.

Diseases in Poultry Sector

2473. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that I.B.D. and I.B.H. diseases in poultry have spread at several places which have caused great loss to this sector;

(b) if so, whether Government have estimated the loss incurred thereon especially in Batala, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts of Punjab;

(c) the steps taken/being taken to compensate for such losses; and

(d) whether any advance information about the occurrence of the diseases can be had beforehand and imparted to the concerned persons for taking precautionary measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (d) The information is being gathered and will be placed on the table of the Sabha.

Encouragement of Farmers to increase Agricultural Output

2474. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is Government's policy to encourage farmers to increase their agricultural output;

(b) if so, whether Government will ensure sale or processing of such produce at the places where farmers may like to sell or process freely;

(c) if so, by when; if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the restrictions imposed on processing/sale/purchase of agricultural inputs are adversely affecting agriculture production; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and by when they will be removed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Marketing and Processing of agricultural produce has been progressively liberalised. The farmers have reasonable freedom regarding processing and sale of agricultural produce. The draft Agriculture Policy Resolution placed in Parliament on 14.5.1993 envisages to enhance the focus on these aspects.

(d) and (e) By and large there are no restrictions on processing/sale/purchase of agricultural inputs by the farmers.

Free Trade in Agricultural Products

2475. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's policy is to encourage farmers to increase their production;

(b) if so, whether Government will permit farmers to purchase agricultural inputs of cheap and good quality from any country of the World without restrictions in order to raise their production;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, whether the restrictions are not contrary to the policy of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The present import policy regarding agricultural inputs is quite pragmatic. Agricultural machinery and pesticides (technical grade material) can be imported under OGL. The import of DAP and MOP, two of the three major fertilisers has been decanalised. The New Policy on Seed Development 1988 provides for making available the best seeds and planting material in the World to our farmers to increase agricultural productivity, production and farm incomes.

Technique to Develop Potato Seeds

2476. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new technique known as TPS or true potato seeds has been developed to increase the production of potato in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to make it popular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The true potato seed technology makes use of seed and not the tuber for raising the potato crop. The technique requires only 100 gm. seed per ha. against nearly 3 tonnes of seed tubers. The yields are identical and TPS is resistant to late blight. Two hybrid TPS